

FINAL

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for the

Whittier-Anchorage Pipeline
Tank Farm Property Transfer



August, 2006

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ASSESSMENT**

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Reviewed by:

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Approved by:

DAVID L. SHUTT
Colonel, U.S. Army
Commanding

Date

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

United States Army, Fort Richardson, Alaska, Transfer of the Whittier-Anchorage Pipeline Tank Farm Property to the Port of Anchorage, an entity of the Municipality of Anchorage

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Environmental Analysis of Army Actions; Final Rule (32 CFR Part 651, 2002) require the Army to assess the potential environmental impacts of transferring the Whittier-Anchorage Pipeline Tank Farm (WAPTF) property (approximately 48.2 acres) to the Port of Anchorage (Port), an entity of the Municipality of Anchorage. The focus of the associated Environmental Assessment (EA) is to identify and analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with the property transfer. The scope of the environmental analysis is therefore limited to the potential impacts of the ownership transfer, as well as any additional impacts represented by reasonably foreseeable capital improvements to be made to the property by the Port.

Description of Action: USARAK proposes to transfer to the Port all right, title, and interest in and to the WAPTF property. This action would secure the capital improvements the Port has made to the portion of the WAPTF property that they currently lease, and would enable the Port to pursue future improvement plans it may take on for expansion on the WAPTF property. There are two reasonably foreseeable improvements that would directly follow and would be facilitated by the completion of the property transfer. The first reasonably foreseeable improvement for the WAPTF property includes grading, drainage enhancement, and paving in the area directly east of security Checkpoint 3. The second reasonably foreseeable improvement for the WAPTF property would involve the construction by the Port of an administrative office building with adjacent paved parking areas, and an access road from the Port side, all of which would replace the existing Port office facilities currently located on the main transit dock.

Decision: USARAK officials must decide whether to transfer the WAPTF property to the Port (Alternative 1, Proposed Action) or to take no further action (Alternative 2). If USARAK officials decide to undertake the Proposed Action, Army officials must then decide whether the environmental impacts associated with the WAPTF property transfer are significant, and whether the current level of environmental analysis is sufficient to allow the transaction to proceed.

Procedure: Analysis of potential environmental impacts associated with each alternative action is set forth in the *Whittier-Anchorage Pipeline Tank Farm Property Transfer Environmental Assessment*. The associated EA provides the decision maker with the information necessary to evaluate the environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic implications associated with the alternatives. The facts, analysis and conclusions contained in this EA are incorporated into this draft decision document. Environmental issues assessed in this document were determined to be relevant if they fell within the scope of the Proposed Action, if they suggested different actions, or if they influenced the decision on the Proposed Action.

Public comments are welcome up to 30 days following public announcement of the EA. Comments will be recorded in the Administrative Record, and relevant comments or concerns may be incorporated into the Final Finding of No Significant Impact and associated EA.

Environmental Impacts: Under Alternative 1, the Proposed Action, minor temporary impacts will result from the property transfer and resulting construction to be undertaken by the Port. These include disturbing currently stable soils, undertaking disposal or reuse of soils contaminated with petroleum products, as well as fugitive dust and construction equipment noise impacts. Moderate, but limited, impacts may also be realized to the view neighboring property owners at Government Hill currently enjoy.

Beneficial impacts would be realized in the Port area from having new land to develop and use in accordance with current zoning. By that method, transportation networks in the area would be improved. Specifically the Port's Road and Rail Extension project would be preserved. Additional beneficial impacts would be realized in an easing of public access restrictions to new Port offices that are planned for the WAPTF property, while also setting up a "view buffer zone" along the upper portion of the WAPTF property. The latter would help to minimize the impacts to the neighboring Government Hill property.

Mitigation Measures: Soil impacts would be minimized by restabilization during and after construction, and by properly disposing of or reusing contaminated soils. Fugitive dust and construction noise would be minimized as practicable, and would be temporary in duration. View shed impacts from potential Port construction on the WAPTF property would be minimized by both architectural design and building placement.

Conclusion: USARAK has chosen Alternative 1 (Transfer WAPTF property to the Port) as its intended course of action. Based on a review of the information in this EA, USAG-AK determined that transfer of the WAPTF property, as set forth in Alternative 1, is not a major action that would significantly affect the quality of the environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. Accordingly, the preparation of an environmental impact statement for this proposed action is not required.

Point of Contact: Requests for further information should be directed to Kevin Gardner, U.S. Army Garrison Alaska, 724 Postal Service Loop #4500, Fort Richardson, AK 99505-4500, Attn: IMPA-FRA-PWE (Gardner); kevin.gardner@us.army.mil

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